

1960

EC60-1151 Finishing Wood Floors

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Finishing

wood floors

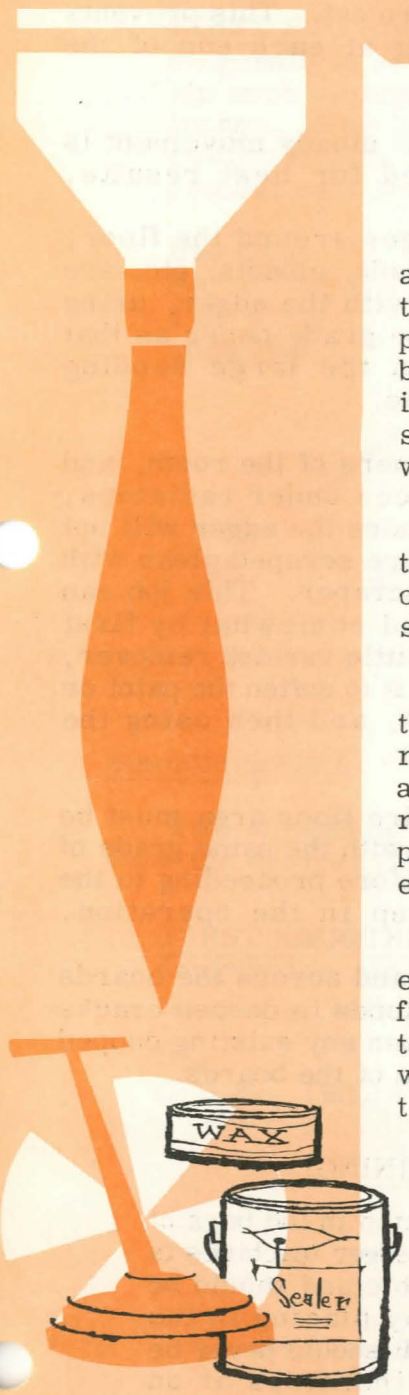
Jerre L. Withrow
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Wood floors can add warmth and charm to any decor. Wood has character of its own and establishes the "feeling" of a room. A floor can set the stage for sophisticated or rustic furnishings. Wood floors give color, pattern and texture to a room. Floors may be hard wood such as oak, birch or maple, or soft wood such as fir or pine. Flooring may be laid in strips, planks, blocks or parquet. Regardless of the type of wood, or style of installation, satisfaction with the appearance and ease of upkeep will depend on proper finishing.

A tung oil base, light body type sealer will provide a hard, durable, tough finish. Finishes such as varnish and shellac merely coat the surface of the floor and in time are scratched or worn off. Penetrating wood sealer sinks into and seals the pores of the wood, protecting it permanently.

Each coat of sealer fills the cavities of the wood cells and saturates the surface so that it becomes a part of the wood. Most sealers are resistant to water or moisture, some are resistant to alkalis, heat and alcohol. Filler is not necessary. Once a floor is properly finished, resanding the entire area is seldom necessary. Worn places may be patched without showing lapping. Even burn marks or scarred spots can easily be restored. Waxing is usually unnecessary.

Finishing a new floor or refinishing an old floor requires the same equipment and procedure. An old floor on which many layers of surface finish have built up will, however, require additional preliminary sanding to remove the old finish. Proper equipment, correct method and time will help reduce the amount of work necessary and insure satisfaction with the completed job.



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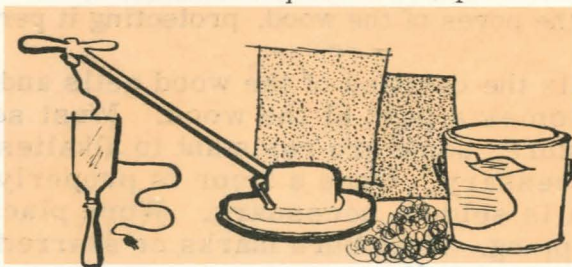
EQUIPMENT

Smoothing

- . Sander - use a heavy type floor sander - a machine may "Chatter" the floor.
- . Abrasive Paper - open coat. Grit Nos. COARSE 4 or 3 1/2; MEDIUM 2 or 1 1/2; FINE 2/0 or 1/0.
- . Edger - the edges of the floor (closets, alcoves or bay windows, where it is impractical to use the larger sander) are sanded with an edger.
- . Hand scraper for corners.

Finishing

- . Sealer - thin type
applicator
pan
mop handle
- . Polisher - brush
#1 steel wool
- . Paste or liquid wax (optional)



PREPARATION

1. Remove furnishings and obstacles.
2. Remove tacks which may have held down floor covering.
3. Tighten loose boards by nailing from the top and setting with nailset and hammer.
4. Countersink protruding nails.
5. Turn off radios, TV and unnecessary lights before starting the sanding machine.

SMOOTHING FLOORS

Method

1. The sanding machine is capable of cutting in either a forward or backward motion, and should be so used.
2. Before reaching the baseboard, the drum should be raised slowly and then eased down on the return cut. This prevents grooving at each end of the room.
3. An even, steady movement is required for best results.
4. The edges around the floor, stair treads, closets, etc. are sanded with the edger, using the same grade paper as that used on the large sanding machine.
5. The corners of the room, and the spaces under radiators, etc., where the edger will not reach, are scraped clean with a hand scraper. This job can be eased somewhat by first using a little varnish remover, allowing it to soften the paint or varnish, and then using the scraper.
6. The entire floor area must be finished with the same grade of paper before proceeding to the next step in the operation.
7. Never sand across the boards as this tends to deepen cracks and deepen any existing cupped condition of the boards.

WARNING:

The dust collected in the bags of the sander and edger machines is highly flammable and should be disposed of by placing in the garbage can. It should never be placed in incinerators or on open fires.

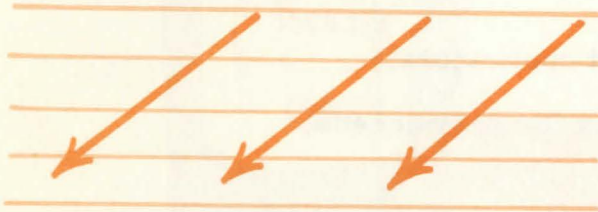
Preliminary Roughing Cuts

A first and second roughing cut are made on old floors with curled boards or heavy coats of paint or varnish. (These two steps are unnecessary on new floors or floors in good condition with only a normal coat of varnish or shellac.)

During the cutting process the varnish or paint heats, and the large spaces between the abrasive grits on the open coat provides a place for the melted material to adhere. When the paper becomes filled it will leave a dark line on the clean wood; at this point the paper should be removed and a fresh sheet put on the drum.

1. **FIRST ROUGHING CUT** - Guide sander diagonally at about a 45° angle. Overlap each sanding path about two or three inches. Use forward and backward motion to eliminate high spots and to remove paint and varnish accumulation.

Use Grit
No. (COURSE)
4 or $3\frac{1}{2}$
open coat



2. **SECOND ROUGHING CUT** - Guide sander diagonally at about a 45° angle in opposite direction.

Use Grit
No. (COARSE)
4 or $3\frac{1}{2}$
open coat



Smoothing Cuts

Two smoothing cuts are necessary on all floors to remove scratches and produce the desired final condition.

1. **FIRST SMOOTHING CUT** - Use smooth lengthwise strokes the direction of boards or with grain of wood.

Use
Grit No. (MEDIUM)
2 or $1\frac{1}{2}$



2. **FINAL SMOOTHING CUT** - Use smooth lengthwise strokes the direction of boards or with grain of wood.

Use
Grit No. (FINE)
2/0 or 1/0



Filling Cracks

Wide cracks in floors should be filled after smoothing. A paste may be made of sealer and the dust collected from the edger bag on the final sanding. The paste may be worked into the cracks and nailholes and allowed to set for 8 hours. It will be necessary to smooth the filled spots. Use fine sand paper and lengthwise motion as in the final sanding.

FINISHING

Cleaning

1. Sweep floor to remove sanding dust.
2. Wipe with a rag or mop dampened in turpentine.

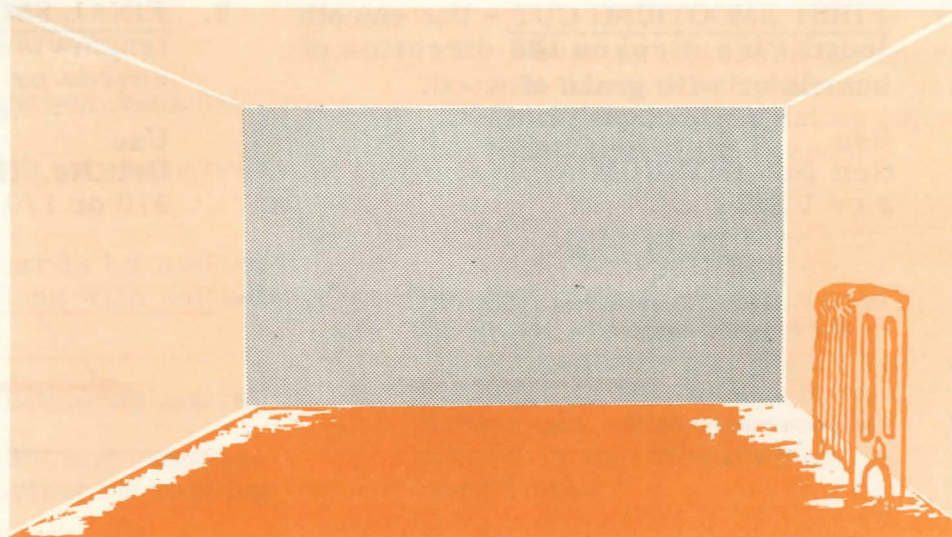
WARNING:

Turpentine is highly flammable. Use only in a well ventilated room. Remove applicators and containers to a safe place when wiping is completed.

Applying Sealer

Sealers may be applied with a lambs wool applicator, mop, squeegee or lint-free rags.

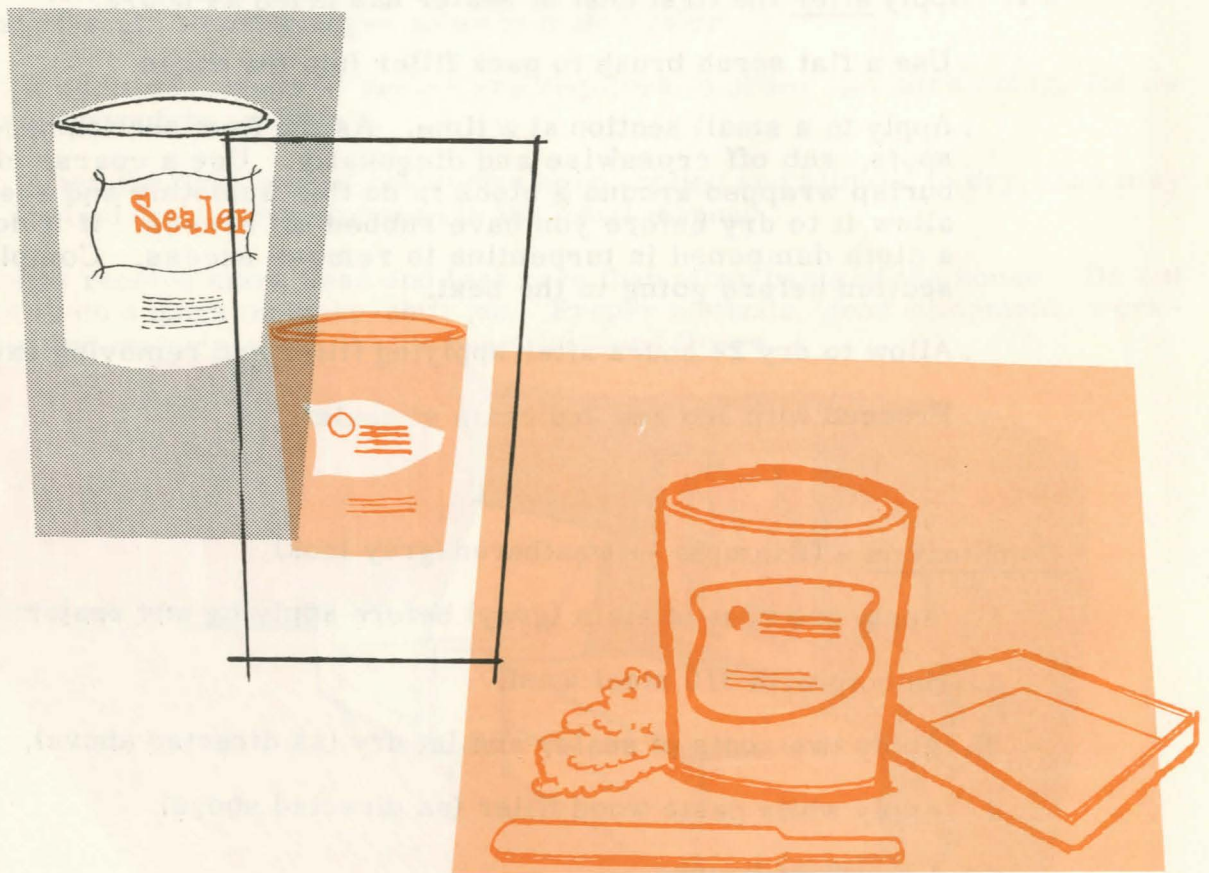
1. Use only clean containers and applicators.
2. Pour sealer into a shallow pan for easy access.
3. Apply sealer sparingly.
4. Begin with edges of the room, spaces under radiators, etc., then proceed to general area.
5. Spread sealer across the boards.
6. Smooth out sealer moving with the boards to eliminate bubbles or puddles.

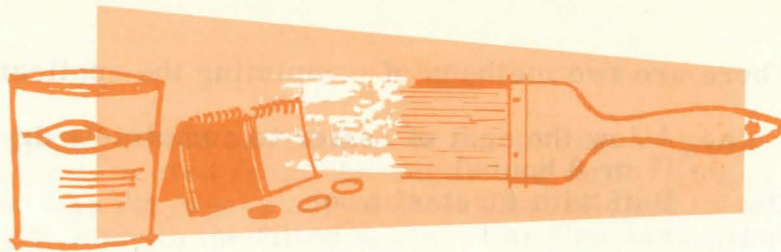


7. There are two methods of completing the application:

- a. Allow the coat of sealer to completely dry
(7 or 8 hours)
Buff with #1 steel wool.
- b. Allow seal to reach a thickened "cheesey" state.
Remove excess sealer with #1 steel wool.
This method shortens drying time and hardens the
surface.

8. Three coats of sealer are necessary. For second and third coats
repeat process of applying sealer and steel wooling used for the first
coat.





COLORING (optional)

Stain, available in a wide range of natural wood tones and decorator colors, colored filler, or a combination of both may be used.

Stain

1. Apply sparingly lengthwise of boards before applying any sealer.

Filler

1. Apply after the first coat of sealer has dried 24 hours.
 - . Use a flat scrub brush to pack filler into the pores.
 - . Apply to a small section at a time. As the first section becomes dull in spots, rub off crosswise and diagonally. Use a coarse cloth such as burlap wrapped around a block to do this smoothly and evenly. Do not allow it to dry before you have rubbed off excess. If it does dry, use a cloth dampened in turpentine to remove excess. Complete the first section before going to the next.
 - . Allow to dry 24 hours after applying filler and removing excess.
 - . Proceed with 2nd and 3rd coats of sealer.

Combination - (Example -- weathered-gray look)

1. Apply one coat of stain (gray) before applying any sealer; dry 24 hours.
2. Smooth with 3/0 steel wool.
3. Apply two coats of sealer and let dry (as directed above).
4. Apply white paste wood filler (as directed above).
5. Let dry 24 hours.
6. Steel wool it, dust it, wipe with cloth slightly dampened in turpentine.
7. Apply third coat of sealer - do not steel wool it.
8. Wax is not necessary unless floor gets an excess of traffic.

STORING SEALER

Left-over sealer may be stored satisfactorily in a can with a tight fitting lid. To prevent hardening or skin forming fill the container full, allowing only a minimum of air space between liquid and lid.

REPAIRING WORN SPOTS

After a period of time, worn spots may appear in the very heavy traffic areas. These can be touched up and renewed, using the following procedure:

1. Remove all wax from the areas to be refinished, using turpentine, spirits, or naptha, and clean rags.
2. After cleaning agent has thoroughly evaporated, apply sealer with #1 steel wool, rubbing vigorously to work the seal in and to smooth the rough surface, blending with the surrounding area. Allow sealer to dry.
3. After sealer has thoroughly dried, rub with #1 steel wool and apply second coat of seal, blending edges so as to match color.
4. If additional coats of sealer are required in order to match color, follow same procedure as Step 3.
5. After the final coat of sealer has been applied and allowed to dry, wax may be applied and floor maintained in the usual manner.

Floors receive more wear and less care than other parts of the house. Do not attempt to do a quick or make-shift job. Proper methods, good equipment, workmanship and materials will insure beautiful wood floors.



Adapted from information prepared by Gena Thames, Extension Service, College of Agriculture, New Brunswick, New Jersey.